THE

Reformed Dissenter,

OR A

CONFERENCE

Between a { Conformist AND A Separatist,

(Being both Parishioners,)

CONCERNING

COMMUNION

WITH THE

Church of England.

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A

CONFERENCE

Between two

PARISHIONERS,

The one a

CONFORMIST,

The other a

SEPARATIST, &c.

Separatiſt. GOOD Morrow, Neighbour; I am glad to ſee you; and much deſire ſome diſcourſe with you about your practice in holding Communion with the Parochial Aſſemblies.

Conformiſt. I hope, in ſo doing, I give no offence to any: I confeſs, I attend the publick Worſhip, and heartily rejoyce that I can hear Chriſt preach'd.

Separat. If you will walk to my Houſe, you and I will confer a little more about this matter: For I would be glad to underſtand upon what Principles you act; for I confeſs, I have not that latitude.

Conform. I hope you will judge charitably of me that

have; for we cannot all see with the same eyes: The Apostles Rule is, *Let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind; and if any man be otherwise minded, God shall in time reveal it unto him. Therefore let not him that eats, despise him that eateth not; nor him that eateth not judge him that eateth.*

Separat. You say very well: I confess, I am against Censoriousness: I am sure that's unlawful, whether Parochial Communion be or not.

Conform. But I hope you do not take it to be unlawful to worship the most high God by prescribed Forms of Prayer, provided we cannot be permitted to do it publickly any other way.

Separat. Truly Sir, I am not free to oppose my Junior thoughts to your Experience; but you know what Learned Men amongst us have written against it; and I cannot answer their Arguments.

Conform. I pray, who hath written against the lawfulness of joyning with the Liturgick way of Worship, when we must disobey Authority if we meet in great numbers to worship God any other wayes?

Seperat. As I told you before, I had rather give you the opinion of other men, than my own; and therefore I'le tell you what a Reverend Doctor saith in this matter.

Conform. I know some learned men may be of another mind: But if Learning must serve instead of Arguments, we may turn Papists as well as Separatists; for there have many learned men wrote in defence of the *Roman* Church. But I pray let me hear his Arguments; for I am for proving all things, and holding fast only that which is good.

Separat. You say very well: For Authority without Reason signifieth nothing, or very little.

Conform. If we should put it to the Poll, I could produce the writings and practices of above a thousand Nonconforming Ministers, in the justification of Lay-communion with the Parochial Assemblies.

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Separat. But I pray, have you ſo many Nonconformiſts for Parochial Communion, that you could name above a thouſand, whoſe writings or practice do approve of it as lawful?

Conform. Yea, I doubt not but I could produce the writings and practice of the above-named number of Nonconformiſts, if need were, for the lawfulneſs of attending the publick Worſhip by the uſe of the Common Prayer, where there is but a tolerable Miniſtry: For it is granted by all men of great conſideration, and well informed underſtandings, that ſome circumſtantial imperfections in the external modes of Adminiſtration, are no juſt ground for a total ſeparation from ſuch a Church, which maintains neither Hereſie in Doctrine, nor Idolatry in Worſhip; but preſerves the Subſtantials of Religion ſound and good, as the Church of *England* doth. There was not five of the whole Aſſembly of Divines, beſides the five diſſenting Brethren, but what were of this mind; and the Body of *London* Miniſters at *Sion-Colledge*, did correſpond with thoſe at *Weſtminſter* in the above-named Propoſition, except ſome few hot men who were leavened with the Principles of Separation, upon pretence of greater purity; which Mr *Cartwright* on the *Proverbs*, calls the White Devil. See alſo Mr *Calamy* againſt *Burton*, Mr. *Caſe*'s Parliament Sermon, Mr. *Dury*'s *Epiſtolary Diſcourſes*, and Mr. *Edwards* his *Gangrena*, and many others.

Separat. But if they think Lay-communion lawful, how comes it to paſs that ſo many of them have written of late againſt the miſchiefs of Impoſition?

Conform. The Arguments uſed in ſuch Books, may ſerve perhaps againſt Miniſterial Conformity; but by no means can they ſerve to prove Parochial Communion ſinful, when our Governours require it as a Duty, and neceſſitate us to uſe that, or none. All men know there is a vaſt difference between Miniſtration in holy things, and attendance on holy Ordinances. Private Chriſtians are not required to ſubſcribe to be re-ordained, and to aſ-

ſent and conſent, as they who are Miniſters are, who are admitted to a Cure of Souls. We may hear the Sermons, and the Prayers, and receive the Sacrament in a private capacity, without any of thoſe things required of us.

Separat. What do you think of *Ames*'s *Freſh Suit againſt the Ceremonies?* Hath not he ſaid enough to convince any man they are unlawful?

Conform. It may ſatisfie any Perſon, that if our Governours thought it Convenient, they might remove many of thoſe things out of the Church; but not to convince reading and intelligent men, that it is unlawful to attend the publick Worſhip of God, where the ſubſtance of Religion is ſound and good, meerly becauſe of ſome modal Defects, and circumſtantial Imperfections; for it is well known, that *Ames* himſelf was againſt a total Separation; and wrote againſt it, even at the ſame time, when he wrote againſt the Impoſition of the Ceremonies; and tells the World, that the practice of the old Nonconformiſts was to attend the publick Worſhip as far as they could without Sin; as you may ſee in his *Character of an* Engliſh *Puritan.*

Separat. But can that which is unlawfully impoſed, be lawfully obeyed?

Conform. Our Queſtion is not, what the Magiſtrate ought to enjoyn, but how far we ought to ſubmit: Let us ſtudy our Duty, inſtead of diſputing his Power. Arch-biſhop *Uſher* uſed to ſay, that men ought to obey Authority in all ſuch things which they could not give as good a reaſon to prove to be ſinful, as they could to prove Obedience to Authority to be lawful: And I am ſure, that the Nonconforming Miniſters who were Commiſſioned by his Majeſty, to conſult with the Conformiſts about the Regulation of the Church in 1660. *viz.* Dr. *Bates*, Dr. *Jacomb*, Mr. *Woodbridge*, Mr. *Cooper*, Dr. *Manton*, Mr. *Baxter*, and ſeveral others, did grant that ſome Corruptions in the external Circumſtances

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of Worſhip might be ſinful in the Impoſer, and voluntary Chooſer, who might ſerve God better, and would not; and yet they might be lawfully ſubmitted unto by ſuch who are conſtrained, and neceſſitated to uſe ſuch, or none; as may be ſeen in the printed Hiſtory of that Affair.

Separat. Then I perceive you have a greater Latitude than the old Nonconformiſts had; for they wrote very ſharply againſt the Surplice, and againſt kneeling at the Sacrament, and did very much harmonize with the Congregational men in our Dayes; and one hath lately written a Book to prove it.

Conform. I told you before, although they did write againſt the Impoſition of the Ceremonies, yet they did at the ſame time write againſt Separation from the publick Aſſembly upon that account: And Mr. *Ball* tells you, that he did not underſtand the *Browniſt* of his time, who at one jump leaps both out of the Surplice and the Pariſh Church too. I purpoſely omit quoting Pages, that men may read the whole Books: See his *Trial of the Grounds of Separation*, and you may receive ample Satisfaction.

Separat. But the Caſe is alter'd now from what it was when the *Preſbyterians* wrote againſt the *Independants*; for now the terms of Communion are more difficult and hard: Then there was no Common Prayer, nor kneeling at the Sacrament, nor ſeveral other things now required.

Conform. I grant that the Terms of Miniſterial Conformity may be harder; but I pray, what is required of the people in order to Communion, which is more uneaſie now, than formerly? I am ſure we have more preaching now, than there was fifty years ago; and ſome things in the Liturgy are explained; and particularly the reaſon of kneeling at the Holy Sacrament, to prevent any ſuſpicion of Idolatry; and alſo many of the Prayers are mended and enlarged.

Separat. I confeſs I am not againſt hearing a good Sermon in a Church, when I cannot hear others more to

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my mind: For I find Dr. *Goodwin* on the *Epheſians*, Mr. *Nye* in his *Grand Caſe Reſolved*, Mr. *Robinſon*, Mr. *Jeremiah Burroughs*, Mr. *Cotton*, and many other Congregational men, defend the lawfulneſs of hearing; but you ſpeak as if you did not ſcruple kneeling at the Sacrament

Conform. I muſt tell you, if I might be left to chooſe my own geſture at the Supper, the Caſe were different; but if I muſt take it kneeling, or not at all, I have ſo impartially examined moſt that hath been wrote on both ſides, that I very much incline to be of Mr. *Vines*'s Opinion, that Geſture is none of the Free-hold of the Ordinance, but is a thing left at liberty, to the determination of humane prudence: For if the ſame Circumſtances are required of us which the Apoſtles and our bleſſed Saviour uſed, we muſt take it leaning and not ſitting; and we muſt receive it in a Garret, and without the company of Women, and a very ſmall number, about Twelve; and with unleavened Bread, and with none but Miniſters. If a Law ſhould conſtrain me to dine, and crave a Bleſſing on my Meat on my knees, I ſhould do it rather than faſt, or think that I adored the Bread, becauſe it ſtood before me. I read, holy Mr. *Dod*, the famous Nonconformiſt adviſed his own Daughter to take it kneeling, in the Epiſtle to Dr. *Morton*'s Book: And Mr. *Bains*, another Nonconformiſt, in his printed Letters ſaith, if he had twenty Scruples in his mind about it, yet he ſhould think it lawful for the reaſons there mentioned: And Mr. *Corbet* is of the ſame mind, as you may ſee in his Writings: And I think, where the Magiſtrate commands that which God hath not forbidden, and forbids that which God hath not commanded, there I may lawfully obey. Mr. *Baily* is of opinion, that men may as well plead for putting on their Hats, as for ſitting at the Sacrament, to ſhew their familiarity and fellowſhip with Chriſt; and Mr. *Tombs* takes great pains, and to very good purpoſe, to ſhew that kneeling at the Supper is none of thoſe things that have an appear-

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ance of evil: Mr. *Cartwright* ſaith, the thing is not in its own nature unlawful, that we ſhould therefore abſtain from the Sacrament, if we cannot have it otherwiſe: And Mr. *Troughton* in his *Apology* tells us, that the old Nonconformiſts diſliked kneeling, yet thought it tolerable, and might be ſubmitted to in caſe of neceſſity; as when the Law of the Land commands it, and the Law of God no where forbids it; and *where there is no Law, there is no Tranſgreſſion.* See Mr. *Aſhwell's Geſtus Euchariſticus*, and Mr. *Paybody's* Book on that Subject.

Separat. I wonder you mention ſo many Authors, when one Scripture for it is worth them all.

Conform. I name theſe Nonconforming Authors firſt, becauſe you are ſo ready to name the Authority of ſome; and I know not why the Authority of ſuch Eminent men as thoſe, may not preponderate theirs: But yet I do not depend upon their Judgments barely conſidered; but the ſtrength of their Reaſons, grounded on Scripture, which requires humble and Reverend Geſtures in the Worſhip of the great God: Who can queſtion, but I may as lawfully take the Body and Blood of the Bleſſed Jeſus upon my knees, as take a Pardon from an earthly Prince in that poſture?

Separat. But that which makes me diſlike kneeling, and other Ceremonies, is, that in the uſe of them we ſymbolize too much with the Church of *Rome?*

Conform. You ſymbolize with the Pope in ſitting; for he takes the Sacrament in that Geſture: If we muſt do nothing that the Church of *Rome* doth, we muſt not kneel when we pray, nor uſe Churches, nor ſprinkle Infants. As at firſt under the pretence of honouring Chriſt, Antichriſt was ſet up; ſo now under the pretence of oppoſing Antichriſt, Chriſt himſelf is in danger of being run down, as Dr. *Burges* well obſerved. I pray read thoſe excellent Caſes of Conſcience now publiſhed, relating to Parochial Communion, written by the *London* Miniſters, amongſt which you will find this Queſtion reſolved: *Whether* Englands *Symbolizing with the Church of* Rome *in ſome things*,

things, be a juſt ground of Separation from the Church of England?

Separat. But I pray, where have you a Scripture Command for Praying by a Form, and doing ſeveral other things in the Worſhip of God? The Apoſtles Commiſſion runs thus; *Obſerve all things whatſoever I command you.*

Conform. We muſt diſtinguiſh between the Subſtantials of Religion, and the Circumſtantials: Chriſt hath given plain Commands about the former, but hath as plainly left the latter to the determination of humane prudence, to be directed according to the general Rules of the Word of God, containing things conducing to order and decency. I pray where have you a Scripture command for ſitting at the Sacrament? for laying your right hand on the Book, and kiſſing it in Swearing; and yet an Oath is part of Gods Worſhip? for Preaching in a black Cloak, for uſing an Hour-glaſs, for ſinging Pſalms in Rhyme, for baptizing Children by Sprinkling, for receiving the Sacrament once a month only, and at Noon rather than at Night; for ringing of Bells to call people to Church at ten a clock, for putting on your beſt Garments on Sundays, for ſtanding at Prayer? Theſe and a hundred other Circumſtances, are things left undetermined by Chriſt and his Apoſtles. I wonder what Scripture Command the *Scotch* Covenanters had for the profeſſing Sign of lifting up their hand to Heaven, when they took that Covenant.

Separat. But God forbids adding or diminiſhing.

Conform. He doth ſo: Therefore let them take heed of it, who ſay that his Law forbids that which he never forbad: The Publican did not add to the Law, when he ſmote upon his Breaſt. Read the Second Part of the *Proteſtant Reconciler*, and the late *Caſe of Conſcience* about *Indifferent things*, if you would not be impoſed upon in this particular.

Separat. I grant many things relating to the Worſhip of God, are left to be determin'd by humane Prudence; but

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but then the People ought to determine thoſe things amongſt themſelves, and not be impoſed upon by others.

Conform. So they do in the *Engliſh* Nation; for do not you, and I, and every *Engliſh* man, by our Repreſentatives in the Parliament make theſe Laws? and is it not reaſonable we ſhould ſubmit to them, until our Superiors think fit to alter them?

Separat. I dare not give ſo much to the Magiſtrates power in matters of Religion, when I know Chriſt is the Supream Law-giver of his Church.

Conform. When the Magiſtrate is on your ſide, then you magnifie his power. I pray read Biſhop *Uſher*'s Diſcourſe of the *Power of Princes*, and read Mr. *Samuel Clark*'s Treatiſe of the *Power of Magiſtrates in Matters of Religion*; wherein he gives an account of the judgment of many eminent Non-conforming Miniſters in their Parliament Sermons upon this Subject: And ſee what Mr. *Byfield* on *Peter*, writ upon that Text, *Submit to every Ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake*; and likewiſe Mr. *Sprint*, the old Conformiſt, and Dr. *Seaman*'s Sermon before the Parliament.

Separat. For my part, I am afraid of Apoſtaſie, when the Word of God ſaith, we ought not to build the things we once deſtroy'd; and alſo when I conſider, If any man draw back, God's Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him; *viz.* ſhall abhor him.

Conform. And I profeſs to you, I am as greatly afraid of wreſting the holy Scriptures to my own deſtruction: I tremble to read that Text of Saint *John*, *If any man add to the Sayings of this Book, God ſhall add to his Plagues.* Now I add, when I give ſuch a ſenſe which the Holy Ghoſt never intended; I wiſh this be not one of the Sins for which the wiſe God now ſeems to contend with us. Let us not blame the Papiſts for making the Scriptures a Noſe of Wax, and do the ſame our ſelves, by telling the People, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, when it never entered into his Heart; and thereby propheſying Lies in his name. Men ought to be very careful leſt they miſapply Scriptures which call

upon men to ſtand faſt in the Chriſtian Faith, to perſwade them to obſtinacy in a particular Opinion or Sect.

Separat. But it is good to keep a tender Conſcience; and for my part, I cannot believe it is lawful for me to hold Communion with the Liturgick Worſhip; and *whatſoever is not of Faith, is Sin.*

Conform. You ſay truly; it's good to keep a tender Conſcience: And if you are fully perſwaded it's unlawful for you to joyn in Parochial Communion, you muſt forbear until you can be ſatisfied that you may lawfully do it; for it muſt be granted, that no man is Maſter of his own perſwaſion, nor can any man believe what he will believe; but every man muſt believe what appears to the Reaſon of his mind to be agreeable to Truth, *&c.* But yet if there be doubts on both ſides, *viz.* Whether it be lawful to Communicate, and whether it be lawful to Seperate, which muſt be the caſe of all men who have been true to their own Underſtandings in reading what hath been written on both ſides; in this caſe it's beſt to take the ſafeſt ſide; and that is, to obey lawful Authority, which every man may be ſure is his Duty, except forbidden by a higher Authority. For your further ſatisfaction in this caſe, read the firſt Edition of Dr. *Sibs*'s *Souls Conflict*, publiſhed by himſelf, and Dr. *Sanderſon*'s Sermons, and Dr. *Ames*'s *Caſes of Conſcience* about the obligation of a *Doubting and Erroneous Conſcience*; Mr. *Geree* alſo (the old Non-conformiſt) in his *Vindication of the Church of* England, and Mr. *Capel* in his excellent Diſcourſe *of Temptations.*

Separat. If a Man could exactly diſtinguiſh between a tender Conſcience, and a tenacious obſtinate Humour, it were well; poſſibly a Private Perſon may do it in himſelf, but its hard to do it in another man.

Conform. There may ſome Rules of diſtinguiſhing be laid down, whereby a man may try himſelf whether his Separation be the Effect of his Tenderneſs, or Humour; as thus: A man that's truly tender, he will act againſt his apparent Intereſt, (I mean, his Worldly Intereſt) to ſecure the peace of his own mind: But here may be a miſtake;

miſtake; for a man may ſpend a great Sum of Money to defend himſelf againſt legal Proſecutions, and get well by the bargain, in pleaſing thoſe Cuſtomers and Benefactors who would not truſt him if he complyed with Authority, nor have ſo good an Opinion of him: Many men have found a great Temptation in ſuffering ſome kind of loſs. Again, a man that's truly tender, will take great pains to inform himſelf by hearing and reading what may be ſaid on both ſides; and hearken to what makes againſt his Opinion, as well as what makes for it. Again, ſuch a one will be very humble and modeſt, and very charitable towards thoſe who differ from him, and be very prone to ſuſpect his own nnderſtanding, eſpecially when he finds his Judgment and Practice differ from the Judgment and Practice of the wiſeſt and beſt men that ever were in the Church of God; and they have ever looked upon a total Seperation from publick Worſhip upon the occount of modal Imperfections, to be Schiſmatical. Again, a truly tender Conſcience will look upon it as a very great Sin, to juſtifie his practice by wreſted Interpretations, and apparent miſapplications of Scripture. Again, a truly tender Conſcience will be afraid of one ſin as well as of another, and as much dread Diſobedience to the lawful Commands of Authority, as of holding Communion with corrupt Members in the Church, and think it a very great Sin to diſturb the peace of the Church by Faction and Schiſm about ſmall Circumſtantial differences, when there is neither Hereſie in Doctrine, nor Idolatry in Worſhip. Read Mr. *Jeremiah Burrough*'s *Irenicum* upon this Argument; *He that cannot do what he would, will do what he can*; he'l not make the breach wider, nor the diſtance greater than he needs muſt, leſt he ſhould betray more of humour and Stomach, than of Conſcience: He that cannot bow at the name of *Jeſus*, yet can ſtand at the Creed; and if not that neither, yet he can be preſent at it: He that cannot kneel at the Sacrament, yet can be preſent at the Prayers, and he that cannot hear the Prayers, yet may hear the Sermon. The truly tender Chriſtian, that cannot obey the Laws himſelf,

ſelf, yet can forbear judging and cenſuring thoſe that do. They that can erect a Judicature for thoſe who differ from them, and arraign them of Superſtition or Formality, ſhall ſooner convict themſelves of Pride and Pragmaticality, than give proof of true tenderneſs of Conſcience.

Separat. But why did not ſome amongſt us comply ſooner? the doing of it at this juncture, gives a very great ſuſpicion that it is not Conſcience, but Carnal Intereſt, to ſave their Stake.

Conform. You ought to judge charitably of others, as you would have them to judge ſo of you; elſe your Noncompliance may by the ſame Rule be called Humour, Obſtinacy, Schiſm, Sedition, and ſuch like: But however that may ſometimes be made a mans Duty, which was not ſo alwayes; to go to the Publick of choice, is one thing, and to do it as a Duty put upon us by Gods Providence, and our Governours, is another: It is God that hath pulled down our Liberty to ſerve him otherwiſe, and we muſt obey him: It's no faulty mutability to change our practice, when God by changing our Condition, changes our Duty; No more than it was to St. *Paul*, who to the *Jews* became a *Jew*, and Circumciſed *Timothy*. We know very well that, *vexatio dat intellectum*, Penalty and Proſecution put men upon reading Diſcourſing, and conſidering thoſe things better, which it may be formerly they never examined: and upon great inquiry, they come to examine whether the things they intended for or againſt, were of ſuch moment as they thought they had been. It's an Argument of great integrity for a man to change his mind upon clear and rational Conviction: See Mr. *How*'s Excellent Sermon in the Morning Lectures againſt uncharitable Cenſoriouſneſs; and Mr. *Caryl* on *Job*, on that Text, *Why perſecuteſt thou me, ſeeing the root of the matter is in me?* O how unſeemly is it for ſuch who plead for a publick Toleration, to deny a perſonal one, and for thoſe who condemn Excommunication, yet Excommunicate their own Members for ſmall matters. Dr. *Manton* in his Sermons

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on the 119th Pſalm, ſeverely condemns that Antichriſtian Spirit gotten among Proteſtants, of unchurching and unchriſtianizing one another for ſmall Differences, impoſing, cenſuring, and rending into Factions, and endeavouring to deſtroy all, to promote the Intereſt of one Party to the Prejudice of the whole: Theſe things are contrary to the temper of a true Catholick Chriſtian, and are a Sign of a Schiſmatical Separatiſt wherever they are found; for who is the true Catholick, but he that can hold Communion with any true Church of Chriſt? and who is the real Schiſmatick, but he that will hold Communion with no Church but his own? See Mr. *Gurnal*'s *Chriſtian Armour*.

Sep. I confeſs, for thoſe men who alwayes thought it their Duty to hold Communion with the Conformiſts, I do not ſo much blame them; but to turn upon a ſuddain, is ſtrange. Why did men formerly go to Meetings, if they do not do it ſtill?

Conform. I think it looks much worſe for a man to perſevere in an Errour, meerly becauſe he once maintained it. They are without doubt the beſt of men that write Retractations, when once they come to ſee their miſtakes, and fairly confeſs them to God and Man. But beſides, you muſt diſtinguiſh between a time when the Supream Magiſtrate gives Indulgence, and when he denies it.

Separat. I cannot but wonder to hear you plead for unſcriptural Terms of Communion, as particularly Forms of Prayer, which ſtint the Spirit.

Conform. How do you prove Forms of Prayer ſtint the Spirit, and that therefore it muſt be unlawful to joyn with them? remember that I am not pleading for the impoſing of them, but for the uſing of them: And I have made this Obſervation; That the Flower of our *Engliſh Divines* have judged Forms of Prayer lawful, when they wrote in cold blood; and it matters not much what men ſay in their hot fits. D. *Preſton*'s judgment may be ſeen in this matter, in his Treatiſe of

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Prayer, and in his Sermon before King *James*: Mr. *Capel* did approve of them, as may be ſeen in his Life, written by Mr. *Marſhal*. Dr. *Ames* alſo in his *Caſes of Conſcience*, ſpeaks favourably of them; Mr. *Dod on the Commandements*, Mr. *Hilderſham* on *John*: Mr. *Rogers* in his ſeven Treatiſes perſwades people to come to Church at the beginning of the Common Prayer; and not the Husband when it's half done, and the Wife at the end of the Service. See the *Miniſters of Old* England *to thoſe of New*, written by Mr. *Aſh* and others; wherein they acknowledge the Common Prayer to be a holy and acceptable Service to God, and Edifying to well-diſpoſed people.

Separat. I am ſure many great Divines have written in defence of Separation.

Conform. I am ſure more great Divines have written againſt it: See Mr. *Perkins* in his *Expoſition of the Epiſtle of St.* Jude, telling the World, that no man can with a good Conſcience ſeparate from the Church of *England*, ſeeing it teacheth, believes and obeyeth the Doctrine of Chriſt and his Apoſtles; Mr. *Brightman* alſo on the *Revelations*, exceedingly condemns Separation from the publick Churches: See alſo Mr. *Edgerton*'s *Practical Chriſtianity*, Pag. 691. *Edit.* 5. Mr. *Bradſhaw* alſo in his *Unreaſonableneſs of Separation*; Mr. *Nichols* alſo in his *Plea for Puritans*, Mr. *Rathband* in his grave Admonitions: See Mr. *Brinſly*'s *Arraignment* of *Schiſm*, Mr. *Wood* againſt *Lockyer*, Mr. *Paget*'s *Arrow againſt Seperation*, Mr. *Caudray* againſt Dr. *Owen*, Mr. *Knewſtabs* in the Epiſtle before his Sermons, Mr. *Greenham* in his Life; read alſo the Story of Mr. *Penry*, who was executed in Queen *Elizabeth*'s time, told by Mr. *Cotton* againſt *Williams*, Page 117. which would make a Separatiſts Heart ake: See Mr. *Fox* his Letter about Separation in *Fuller*'s *Church Hiſtory*, Lib. 9. pag. 106. And Mr. *Brown* the Father of the *Browniſts*, who Conformed at laſt, as you will find in *Fuller*: Read alſo old Mr. *Parker*, in his Book call'd the *Profane Schiſm of the Browniſt*, Chap. 12. who applies

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our Saviours words to them, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do:* Read alſo Mr. *Hilderſhams* Letter to a Gentlewoman in Priſon, about Communion with the Church of *England*; See Mr. *Ball's Trial of Seperation*, Mr. *Dyke* on the 124th Pſalm, and when you have peruſed the Scriptural Arguments of theſe men, you will be better ſatisfied about Lay-Communion.

Separat. I confeſs you have brought abundance of Excellent Mens Authority in the Juſtification of Forms of Prayer, and againſt Seperation upon the Account of the Liturgy; but theſe were old Non-conformiſts, and (as I hinted before) the Caſe is very different now from what it was before the Wars: You'l find it a very difficult matter to name many Non-conformiſts who now agree with them, becauſe we have more light now.

Conform. You are much miſtaken; I can name many Eminent Non-conformiſts, who have written againſt a total Separation from the Publick Worſhip of God in the Parochial Aſſemblies, even ſince his Majeſties Reſtoration; and therefore the Judgment of Moderate Non-conformiſts are not ſo much alter'd, upon the pretence of new Light as you call it. I pray read what Mr. *Baxter* hath written in the Defence of his *Cure of Church Diviſions*, Mr. *Bruning of Ipſwich*, in his Sermon at the Election of Knights of the Shire, Mr. *Sheffield* in his *Treatiſe of Excuſes*. Dr. *Collins* of *Norwich*, although he hath writ againſt the Impoſition of Forms of Prayer, yet tells the World, that he thinks it not unlawful to joyn with them, even at the Holy Sacrament; Mr. *Croſten* alſo, in his *Saints Care for Church Communion*, writes againſt Seperation from the Parochial Churches; Dr. *Bryan* alſo in his Sermons called *Dwelling in God*, anſwers the Separatiſts Objections againſt the Common-prayer; Mr. *Corbet* of *Chicheſter* in his *Plea for Lay-Communion*, doth the like, Mr. *Humphry's two Steps*, Mr. *Read's Caſe*, Mr. *Faircloughs Paſtors*

ſtors *Legacy to his People*, Mr. *Tomb*'s his *Apology for attending the Pariſh Worſhip*, Mr. *Joſeph Allen*'s *Life*, and Mr. *Richard Allen*'s *Farewel Sermon*, Mr. *Cradacott*'s *Farewel Sermon*, Mr. *Lye*'s *Farewel Sermon*. Mr. *Hickman* in his *Bonaſus Vapulans*, tells the World wherever he comes, he perſwades people to attend the publick way of Worſhip; and his Conſcience would flye in his face, if he ſhould do otherwiſe: See alſo Mr. *Pool*'s *Vox Clamantis*, a Latine Book, Mr. *Gouge*'s Practice in the Sermon at his Interment, and Mr. *Samuel Clark*'s *Life*, written by himſelf.

Separat. But ſurely we ought to joyn with the Pureſt Church, and where there are the feweſt corrupt Members at the Holy Sacrament; for if any man that is call'd a Brother, be a Rayler, or a Perſecutor, with ſuch a one we ought not to eat.

Conform. I grant, we ought to chooſe the pureſt Communion we can; but yet we ought not to diſturb the peace of the Church, nor to uſe any unwarrantable Methods, but to obſerve the Providence of God, and regularly reform what is amiſs, according to our place and Station: For as Dr. *Manton* on *Jude* obſerves, Corrupt Mixtures are ground of Lamentation, but not of Separation: He *that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himſelf*, not to me who Receive with him, provided I do my Duty to inform him, and to inform againſt him, as Mr. *Vines* on the *Sacrament* well obſerves: Mr. *Jenkins* on *Jude* gives many Reaſons to prove that it is Civil eating, and not Religious, that the Apoſtle there forbids: Shall I refuſe to go to the Supper, becauſe there is one there, that hath not on a Wedding Garment, ſaith Mr. *Vines*; and the Provincial Aſſembly of *London Miniſters* did grant, that there were greater Corruptions in the Church of *Corinth*, than in any of their Congregations; and yet the Apoſtle no where calls for a Seperation; and the *New-England* Miniſters atteſt, in the *Platform of Diſcipline*, "*That as Separation from a Church, where ſcan-*

ſcandalous livers are tolerated, is not preſently neceſſary, ſo for the worthy Members to abſtain from Communion with ſuch a Church, in the participation of Sacraments, is unlawful. So Mr. *Burroughs* in his *Goſpel Worſhip* tells us, that we are not defiled by the meer preſence of wicked men at the Sacrament, (that's a Deceit and Gull that ſome would put upon them that differ from them) but they are thus far defil'd, if they do not their duty to purge them out as far as they have power: Read Mr. *Jeans* on the *Sacrament*, and Mr. *Blake*'s *Vindication*; And the five Diſſenting Brethren do declare this ſincere Profeſſion before God and the World, that all the Conſcience of the Defilements in the Church of *England*, did never work in any of them any thought, but that multitudes of the Parochial Congregations were the true Churches of Chriſt. And Mr. *John Goodwin* acknowledgeth, that there was more of the Truth and Power of Religion under the late Prelatical Government, than in all the Reformed Churches in the World beſides: See his *Sion Colledge Viſited*; read alſo what Mr. *Henry Jacob* hath wrote upon this Subject againſt a total Separation; and he was looked upon as the Father of the Independants: Have a care leſt you refuſe Communion with Railers while you are ſuch a one your ſelf.

Separat. I much fear ſome mens Compliance at this time, will put a ſtop to a Covenant-Reformation.

Conform. I am of Opinion that nothing more promotes Reformation, than Union amongſt all Chriſtians of the Reformed Religion; and nothing more hinders it, than Separation, and Diviſion; take Biſhop *Uſher*'s word for it, as you may ſee in his Life; and read Dr. *Barrow*'s *Sermons*, and Biſhop *Hall*'s *Peace-maker*, and you will be of my mind: I confeſs I am prone to think, that if our Diſſenters would come to Church, and by their preſence encourage their Miniſters to preach well, and live well, and if he doth not, to acquaint the Biſhop, and get him ſuſpended, and a better in his ſtead; this would

more conduce to publick Reformation, than running away from them and railing at them: The beſt way to reform the Publick, is for every one to endeavour to reform his own Life, and his own Family, and to leave National Reformation to our Governours: Read "Dr. *Horton*'s, and Mr. *Watſon*'s Sermon before the Parliament, and they will tell you, that the Covenant was not only againſt Sin in General, but Schiſm in Particular; and that the very Letter of it was broke. For my part, I think no man can bind himſelf to that which is not in his power, and an unlawful Oath is better broke than kept, when made without a legal Authority. A *Minor* under the Law, if he had made a Vow about any thing, even relating to the Worſhip of God, it was null and void, if made without the free conſent of the Superiour. We ought (as one obſerves) to go to the Scriptures to know what's our Duty in the Worſhip of God, and not to the Covenant: If the Scriptures make it not a Sin, the Magiſtrates Command will make it a Duty. We ought to promote Unity; and as the World goeth now, this Communion is the neareſt, and needful to expreſs our Unity: It is rather Perjury and Covenant-breaking, either to preferr no publick Worſhip before the Liturgy, or to refuſe Communion with the Churches that uſe it. It is worth obſerving, that the Divines who framed the Covenant, (and therefore beſt underſtood the obligations of it) do in their larger Catechiſm prefix this Advice: That at Family Worſhip care ought to be taken, that each Family meet by themſelves apart, leſt it tend to the prejudice of the publick Miniſtry, and cauſe Schiſms and Separations in the Church: For as Dr. *Sibs* well obſerves in his Sermons on the *Corinthians*, Separation is often a greater fault, than thoſe things for which men pretend to ſeperate, becauſe attended with want of Charity.

Separat. I am not ſo much againſt Parochial Communion upon the account of different modes of Worſhip,

ſhip, as upon the account of erroneous Arminian Doctrine taught in the Pulpit: The true Goſpel way of Preaching is left off; and the generality of young men preach up meer Morality, and the power of Nature.

Conform. There are very few men that cenſure what they hear, who underſtand thoſe Controverſies; and the moſt wiſe are of opinion, that thoſe differences are more in words, than in things; and they can with grief of heart hear both *Arminians* and *Calviniſts* charge one another with ſuch odious conſequences which neither of them maintain: Without doubt a Man may be a very good Chriſtian that practiſeth the Sermons of one or t'other, becauſe they agree, if not in their Doctrine, yet in their Application, as Mr. *Chillingworth* well obſerves: it's an eaſier thing to believe in Chriſt as our Saviour meant it, than to underſtand the Definition of Faith as the Schools expound it: Thoſe Doctrines are moſt likely to be true, which moſt promote the Honour of the Creator, and the Diligence of the Creature: I aſſure you, all the Miniſters I hear are agreed in this great Truth delivered by our Saviour; *viz. He that believes ſhall be ſaved, and he that believes not ſhall be damned.* Doth the Miniſter you hear own the Merits of Chriſt in the point of Juſtification, and the Spirit of Chriſt in the work of Sanctification? Do not quarrel with his Doctrine for you know not what: You'l find ſome of your own Brethren differ amongſt themſelves about theſe Points, of Preſcience, Predetermination, Liberty and Neceſſity. Let me adviſe you to read the moderate Peace-making reconciling Authors, who endeavour to narrow differences; eſpecially Judge *Hale*, Biſhop *Wilkins*, Dr. *Tillotſon*, Mr. *Boyl*, and Mr. *Dent*'s *Plain Man's Path-way to Heaven.*

Separat. I cannot underſtand how ſuch who have received a Commiſſion from Jeſus Chriſt to preach the Goſpel, with a Woe annexed if they do not, can lay down their Miniſtry upon the Command of a humane Authority.

Conform. Truly, nor I cannot underſtand it, neither if they do it voluntarily, and without Compulſion, when they might preach and will not; but that's not the Caſe; for men are ſilenced by a legal Authority. Thô it be a Duty to preach the Goſpel, yet it's not the Duty of all men, at all times, and in all places, as it was at the firſt Plantation of Chriſtianity by the Apoſtles, who had an immediate Call from God, and could work Miracles to confirm their Doctrine: However there are more wayes than one to preach the Goſpel: Men may go from houſe to houſe, and by perſonal Conferences, and pious Exhortations, (within the bounds of the Law) may edifie and promote the Converſion of Souls. Read Mr. *Jeremiah Burroughs*'s Advice in his Sermons called *Chriſtian Courage in Evil Times*, Mr. *Joſeph Allen*'s *Call to* Archippus, Dr. *Manton*'s Caſe reſolved on the 119th. Pſalm, *pag.* 334. The old Nonconformiſts did all the good they could in a private capacity, when they were ſilenced by the Biſhops from preaching publickly; and they thought it their Duty to ſubmit to their Suſpenſions, ſo long as their Dioceſans did it by the Law of the Land, as Mr. *Rathband* obſerves in his *Grave Admonitions*, and old Mr. *Parker* challenges the World to give an inſtance of any ſigns of Pride, or Contempt of Authority: Do we, ſaith he, perſwade any man to refuſe the Ceremonies for which we ſuffer? We ſtretch our Conſciences to the utmoſt, to Conform; we do not willingly caſt off our Miniſtry, but ſubmit to the Providence of God, who calls us from it. See his Book on the *Croſs*, part. 21. pag. 34: And Mr. *Geree* in his *Vindication of the Church of* England, in the Epiſtle, (though a Non-conformiſt) ſaith, That for men to preach publickly againſt the Command of the Chriſtian Magiſtrate, without an immediate Call from God, he never thought excuſable from Faction. The Magiſtrate in *England* doth not forbid preaching in the name of Chriſt, for they appoint perſons to do it, and make Laws to puniſh Subjects

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or not hearing. Thanks be to God, we have the Prayers and the Scriptures read in a known Tongue; therefore your Caſe and the Apoſtles very much differ. Read Biſhop *Uſher's* Sermon before King *James*, on the *Unity and Univerſality of the Catholick Church.*

Separat. Good Sir, Do you think that God will ever make uſe of a carnal, ſcandalous Miniſtry to convert Souls?

Conform. Becauſe I induſtriouſly ſhun long Diſputes, and tedious Anſwers, I refer you to the Scriptural Reaſons of excellent *Divines*, who aſſert it as very probable that he doth: As Mr. *Pemble* in his Diſcourſe of the *Nature and Properties of Grace*, pag. 125. Mr. *Samuel Hiern*, in his *Preachers Plea*, and Mr. *Fenner's* Sermon called *Chriſt's Alarum to drowſie Saints*, and Mr. *Anthony Burges's* Treatiſe of *Faith* and *Aſſurance*, pag. 503. and Mr. *Swinnock* in his *Chriſtian Calling*, pag. 155. Firſt Part.

Separat. All this while you omit the moſt conſiderable thing, to juſtifie Communion with the Parochial Aſſemblies: You ſhould prove them to have the matter and form of true Goſpel Churches.

Conform. That I could eaſily do. Firſt. As for the the Matter of our Pariſh Churches, they are a Company of viſible Profeſſors of Saving Faith in Chriſt, with their Children, by the Baptiſmal Covenant ſeparated for God, and dedicated to him, and do take the name of Saints, as the Primitive Churches did. Secondly, And as for the Form, 'tis their congregating together in a ſtated courſe to worſhip God in Chriſt, the only Mediatour between God and Man, to call upon his Name, to hear his Word, to partake of his Sacraments, which was the Form, and the only eſſential Form of the particular Church of *Corinth*, *Epheſus*, *Philippi*, and the reſt; ſo that our Pariſh Churches, and the Primitive Churches planted by the Apoſtles, are for matter and form exactly the ſame; and thoſe who conceive the matter of a Church to be real Saints, have

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miſtaken the true ſenſe and meaning of Scripture, and upon the falſe interpretation thereof have built their new Notions. See Mr. *Hudſon's Eſſence and Unity of the Catholick Church*, Mr. *Geree's Ten Caſes reſolved*, Mr. *Herl's Independency on Scripture*, of the Independent Churches.

Separat. You ſeem ſo much for Parochial Communion, that you make me ſuſpect that you are for a total Separation from the Non-conformiſts in their Meetings.

Conform. You miſtake, for I am for Catholick Communion. I think it Schiſmatical to ſeparate from any good Chriſtians, where the Providence of God gives me an opportunity to hold Communion, provided the Numbers are ſuch as give no juſt offence to my lawful Superiors, well knowing, that the Law hath left men within the compaſs of the Promiſe; *viz. Where two or three are met together in* Chriſt's *name, he is in the midſt of them.* I am not againſt occaſional Communion with any Chriſtians who obſerve ſuch Rules of Prudence as tranſgreſs not the Laws of the Land.

Separat. To make Laws about the Worſhip of God, and appoint what he hath not commanded, I am afraid it looks like an uſurpation upon the kingly Office of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who above all things ought to have the preeminence in teaching ſpiritual Duties.

Conform. I grant, to impoſe any Ceremonies, to teach ſpiritual Duties without a Licenſe from Chriſt himſelf, is to treſpaſs upon his Kingly and Prophetical Office; but I know no Ceremonies appointed to be uſed to that end, and therefore the Argument is grounded upon a falſe Suppoſition. The Church, I confeſs, hath appointed ſuch Ceremonies as ſhe conceiveth apt to ſtir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his Duty by ſome ſpecial Signification; but ſhe hath no where ſaid, that ſhe injoyns them to teach ſpiritual Duties; ſhe hath injoyn'd her Miniſters to wear a Surplice when they officiate, but hath not ſaid, that

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ſhe injoyns it to teach them innocence or purity: She injoyns people to kneel at the Sacrament; and ſhe tells us, that we ſhould ſignifie thereby our humble and grateful acknowledgments of the Benefits of Chriſt, but ſhe doth not ſay that ſhe deſigns thereby to teach us Humility and Gratitude for thoſe benefits, but only calls upon us to expreſs that Humility and Gratitude which ſhe ſuppoſeth us to have already. And I pray, once again take notice, that I am not pleading for the Impoſition of any Ceremonies, but only arguing how far it may be our Duty to ſubmit to them when impoſed, rather than diſobey lawful Authority, diſturb the publick Peace, and ruine our Families; thereby rendering our ſelves worſe than Infidels: But it can be no incroachment on the Offices of Chriſt, to make uſe of ſuch things, as are only apt to ſtir up our minds by way of remembrance of our known preſcribed Duty: If this be unlawful, it's unlawful to tole a Bell to put us in mind of going to Prayers, or to keep by us a Death's Head to put us in mind of our Mortality: Is it a derogation from the kingly Office of Chriſt to require men to come gravely into the Houſe of God, with their Heads uncovered, and to kneel at Prayer, becauſe thoſe things are apt to ſtir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of the Majeſty and Greatneſs of God: Chriſt hath not in Scripture ſet down all thoſe things that may give occaſion to good Affections, and pious Meditations. You know the Story of the Cook, who from the conſideration of the heat of his own fire, was moved to reflect on the torments of Hell fire, and thereby to abſtain from that which would expoſe him to it: See Mr. *Tombs* his *Theodalia*, who proves Lay-Communion with the Liturgy no derogation to the kingly Office of Chriſt.

Separat. But don't you know that under the Law, there was nothing appointed in the Worſhip of God, but was fully ſet down, even unto the Pins of the Tabernacle; and nothing might be done by *Moſes* nor

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Solomon, about the Tabernacle, or the Temple, though they were two of the wiſeſt men that ever lived; but it muſt be according to the Pattern which God had given in writing: Since therefore Chriſt was faithful in all his houſe, (as *Moſes* was) he hath alſo given us a Pattern, *viz.* the holy Scriptures.

Conform. This Argument holds as ſtrong againſt the Statute-Book, as the Liturgy, and if the Argument here holds from the Fidelity of *Moſes*, to that of *Chriſt*, we ought to have had a Form of Civil Government, as well as of Sacred; or elſe Chriſt muſt be thought leſs faithful; for he ſaith of the Judicial Law, as well as of that relating to the Worſhip of God, *You ſhall obſerve to do as the Lord hath commanded you, and ſhall not turn unto the right hand, or to the left:* And indeed Arguments taken from Similitudes may conclude things falſe; for there was a High-prieſt, therefore there muſt be an Univerſal Biſhop over all Chriſtians, if your Argument hold good; and you know who will thank you for that.

Separat. If you could give out any Inſtances of ſuch things appointed by the Rulers of the *Jewiſh* Church, in ſacred things, beſides what *Moſes* ordained by divine Command, you would ſay ſomething.

Conform. Dear Friend, I could mention ſeveral Particulars for which they had no Precept to direct them, but the uſe of Reaſon, and prudential Diſcourſe, for directing the practice both of Prieſt and People: But becauſe our time is ſhort, I ſhall only refer you to read Dr. *Lightfoot*'s *Temple Service*: As for Inſtance; the High-prieſt was to confeſs over the Scape-Goat all the Iniquities of the Children of *Iſrael*; but we find not in the Law of *Moſes* any Form of words that the Prieſt was to uſe; therefore the Elders of the Church appointed him to ſay, *Ah, Lord! Thy people, the Houſe of Iſrael, have ſinned; we beſeech thee, O Lord, expiate*

piate the Sins, Perverſities and Tranſgreſſions of thy people. And ſee many more particulars in the Doctors Book.

Separat. But can you produce any Circumſtances relating to the Worſhip of God, which Chriſt hath left undetermined, and referred to humane Prudence under the Goſpel.

Conform. Yes, many: As for inſtance; Chriſt hath commanded us to aſſemble for his ſolemn Worſhip, but he hath ſaid nothing of the time and place where and when he would have us aſſemble, or of the Ornaments of the place, or of the diſpoſal of the Seats, or whether we ſhould ſit or ſtand, whil'ſt hearing, or with what number we ſhould meet, or how long we ſhould be together, whether uſe a ſet Form, or pray *ex tempore*, whether the Miniſter alone, or the people joyn their voices with him; nor in reading hath he told us what Book, what Chapter, what Part ſhould be read, nor what Tranſlation, nor whether the Miniſter ſhould preach by Doctrine, Reaſon and Uſe, or without, nor what Subject he ſhould chuſe, nor whether with Notes, or from his memory; nor hath he told us how often we ſhould receive the Sacrament, nor whether the Bread ſhould be all of Wheat, or of ſome other Grain, or the Wine Sack, Claret or Muſcadine. Innumerable other Inſtances I could give of things left by *Jeſus Chriſt* to be determined by humane Prudence.

Separat. Now under the Goſpel God will not accept any thing of the Creatures deviſing in his Service, but will now be worſhipped in Spirit and in Truth.

Conform. This Notion of yours, I am perſwaded, is a meer humane Invention; and the common people run away with a great miſtake, when they hear or read the Sermons of ſome againſt unneceſſary Impoſition, and thence inferr, that they muſt not joyn with ſuch a mode of Worſhip, as hath ſome things in it

that are faulty and defective; especially, when the Providence of God doth not permit them to enjoy such as they call Purer Ordinances: Moreover, Worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth is opposed to Formality, not to Forms of Prayer; for a Christian may pray in the Spirit, and use a Form too. A Man may worship God with his Heart, and yet with his voice, and upon his knees, and with his head uncovered. I pray, read Mr. *Byfield* on *Peter*, *Submit to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake.*

Separat. Good Neighbour, doth not your Submission to the Impositions of man, bereave you of your Christian Liberty? And we are bidden to *stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*, and not to be *again entangled with the Yoke of Bondage.*

Conform. Is it not very absurd (think you) to suppose, that our Lord should purchase for his Church a liberty to disobey Superiours; especially, when our Obedience to them visibly promotes Love, Peace, Unity, Humility and holy Order; and our Disobedience promotes, Schisms, Dissentions, Uncharitableness, Calumnies, Wrath, Strife, Contentions, and exposeth Families to ruine. The Magistrates Command cannot violate our Christian Liberty, so long as it's only in things of an indifferent nature, because the Conscience is obliged by them: At this rate the Commands of Masters and Parents must violate Christian Liberty: If we refuse to submit to things indifferent, because commanded; 'tis but forbidding us to yield Obedience to them, and then, by your own Principles, we must be exact Conformists. Christian Liberty cannot be violated by requiring Persons to do that of which their Conscience (being erroneous) doubts; for, if it were, then our Laws violate Christian Liberty, when they command the *Quaker* to pay Tythes, and the Papist to take the Oath of Supremacy. See Mr. *Downham's Christian Liberty*, and Mr. *Bolton's True Bounds of Christian Freedome*, and Mr. *Galespy's Wholesome Severity reconciled to Christian Liberty.*

Separat.

Separat. For my part I dare not joyn with the Parochial Aſſembies in their Ceremonies, leſt I ſhould encourage Superiors in their impoſing Burthens upon others; and harden them in that which I take to be their Sin; and ſo ſhould be a partaker in Guilt. I think it my Duty rather to bear my Teſtimony againſt theſe things.

Conform. This Opinion will lead to Faction in the State, as well as to Schiſm in the Church; and we may as well quarrel with many Acts of Parliament, which may in time become burthenſome; and if this Opinion be true, then muſt our Lord and his Apoſtles become guilty of the like Sin; for they did ordinarily joyn with the *Jews* in their publick Service; notwithſtanding they who ſate in *Moſes*'s Chair, impoſed more Ceremonies than are impoſed in our Church: We only become guilty of the Sins of others directly, by actually conſenting unto, willing or approving of the Sin of others, or by commanding the doing of it, or by perſwading, encouraging, or alluring others to Sin: Or Indirectly, when we do that which is a culpable occaſion of Sin: But here is no occaſion juſtly given, though it may be unjuſtly taken. We find in Scripture, it was required that they ſhould lye down in their Idol Temples to worſhip, and yet the *Jews* (though God no where commanded them to do ſo) did at the eating of their Paſſover lye down, in token of the Reſt that God had given them in the good Land; and we find, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles did conform themſelves to this Cuſtom, without thinking themſelves guilty of the Sin of thoſe who firſt required this Idolatrous Cuſtom. What if *Independency* were too rigorouſly impoſed? muſt we forbear it, or juſtifie the Law?

Separat. I muſt deal freely with you, and declare, that one great Objection that I have againſt Parochial Communion, is, That it miniſters Scandal to our weaker Brethren; and you know what the Apoſtle ſaith in that caſe.

Conform. I cannot tell how the People in the City have been taught; but I think, if any of them are so weak, as to be scandalized at their Fellow Citizens Communion with the publick Assemblies, they ought to be better instructed; for, Scandal (properly considered) is an action whereby occasion is ministred to the Sin, Fall, and Ruine of our weak Brother, by laying a Stumbling-block in his way: But that Sin and Fall of others which is occasioned by my doing of my Duty, cannot be my Sin: So the Preaching of the Cross was to the *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and the Gospel preached was to some a Savour of Death. By Obedience to the lawful Commands of my Superiours, I cannot be guilty of sinful Scandalizing of my Brother, because Obedience is my Duty. The Scandal caused by one that refuseth Communion, when he may lawfully obey, is *Scandalum datum*, because it ariseth from the Omission of a Duty; but the Scandal administred by the Communicant, can be only *Scandalum acceptum*, or Scandal arising not from the Action of him that holds Communion, but from the Ignorance and Weakness of him that is offended at his so doing; for I give my weak Brother no just occasion to be grieved at what I do, or to pass Censure upon me as an Evil-doer, or to separate from Communion with me, or to do with a doubting Conscience what he seeth me do: But, by omission of my Duty to Superiors in lawful things, I give just occasion to all who piously and peaceably conform, to grieve at my Action, and to pass their Censures on me, as one turbulent, schismatical, and disobedient to higher Powers: And if I do (by my example) occasion the Omission of my Brother's Duty, and his Separation, I shall be justly charged with his guilt, as ministring Temptation to him by that Example, to neglect what he ought to do; and so I must offend him truly (in the Apostles sense) by tempting him to Sin. As I must not offend my Brother, so I must not offend my Governour, who is my Brother also.

alſo. Read Dr. *Sanderſon*, Biſhop *Uſher*, Biſhop *Reynolds*, and other excellent Divines who have written upon this Argument, and it will plainly appear, that he that refuſeth to conform to Lay-Communion, leſt he ſhould offend his weak Brother, ſeems directly to ſin himſelf, to avoid an occaſion of Sin in another; and ſo offends God, the King, the Church, the Laws and Conſcience too, by not doing his Duty, leſt he ſhould offend his Brother by doing it: And therefore I cannot but commend the practice of ſuch Non-conforming Miniſters who go unto the Pariſh-Churches, if it be but to convince the people, (by their practice) that they do not think it a Sin ſo to do.

Separat. But when you once begin to comply, do you know where you ſhall end? Therefore it's beſt not to yield in the leaſt, but to ſhun the beginnings of Sin.

Conform. When you once begin to ſeparate from the publick Worſhip, do you know where you ſhall end? whether in Atheiſm or Quakeriſm, as multitudes have done, who have thrown off all Ordinances upon the pretence of purer Adminiſtrations? We are to examine whether the Commands of our Superiors are at preſent lawful, not whether they may be ſo hereafter: Will you like it, if your Child ſhould refuſe to obey your lawful Commands, for fear you ſhould live to command ſomething that's unlawful? This Argument would cancel the Obligation of all Laws. Let us do our preſent Duty, and truſt God with future events; and when we are called to ſuffer rather than ſin, we may then ſuffer comfortably: For (as Mr. *Jeremiah Burroughs* well obſerves) it hath been a very dividing Principle, that ſome Men have taken up, *viz.* Not to go as far as they could, becauſe they could not go as far as they would. Indeed it's good to ſhun the Beginnings of Sin, but it's not good to call that Sin which God never call'd ſo.

Separat. Pu by your Compliance, you occaſion the Suffer-

Sufferings of many conſciencious Chriſtians, who cannot do as you do; and ſo you encourage Perſecutors.

Conform. Its a groſs miſtake, to think that our Communion juſtifieth the penal Severities of the Laws on others: What if it were death for a man to have his Hat on at the publick Prayers? doth it juſtifie the rigour of the Law, for a man to pull off his Hat? Muſt I forbear that which my Conſcience calls my Duty, if an other ſuffer for counting it a Sin? have not Mr. *Tombs* and Mr. *Nye* writ in defence of the Oath of Supremacy, though many have ſuffered for refuſing it. Muſt not I obey the Laws, becauſe others ſuffer for diſobeying them? Mr. *Strong* in his Sermons call'd *Two Sticks made One*, tells us, That the way to Peace and Unity, is, for men to comply as far as they can, even againſt their own Rights; and Mr. *Cotton* on *Cant.* ſaith, That it's no Infringement of Chriſtian Liberty to ſubmit to Chriſtian Laws. I remember, one of my Neighbours neglected to baptize his Child, who, when I blamed him for not bringing his Child to Church for that end, told me, one of his Brothers diſcouraged him, who had never brought any of his Children, becauſe it would be a means to cauſe his ſuffering for the Omiſſion: But this was a very weak Argument for the former to neglect his Duty.

Separat. This ſinful Compliance weakens the Proteſtant Intereſt.

Conform. Sinful Compliance I condemn as much as you do; and I am ſure that ſinful Separation ſtrengthens the *Roman* Intereſt; and I am confident, that Union amongſt thoſe who profeſs the Reformed Religion, is the beſt Bulwark againſt Popery: See Biſhop *Uſher*'s Life, and an excellent Diſcourſe, called, *The Neceſſity of maintaining the preſent eſtabliſhed Religion in oppoſition to Popery.* See Dr. *Bates*'s his *Farewell Sermon*, and he will tell you, That *Separation and Diviſion gives a mighty advantage to Popery*; Mr. *Wood* an eminent Presbyterian, in his Anſwer to *Lockyer*, tells him,

him, That the *Separating Principle is like to prove a Diſgrace to the Reformation, and will open a Door to Popery.* Read alſo Mr. *Gataker* againſt *Can*, and Mr. *Whitaker*'s Sermon before the Parliament.

Separat. But by going to the publick we do, as it were, acknowledge our ſelves to have been in an errour formerly, when we went to private Meetings.

Conform. I confeſs, I have often thought that the reaſon why many would not come at the Pariſh Churches, was, either from Ignorance, Melancholly or Shame, which are the three grand Cauſes of Scrupuloſity: But, I pray, why ſhould any man be aſhamed to change his practice, if he once comes to ſee his errour and miſtake. Let me ask you one Queſtion: Did you ever imagine before, that ſo many Learned, Wiſe and Good Men were againſt a total Separation from the Pariſh Churches? Have not the beſt men that ever were changed their practices, when they have been convinced of their Errours and Miſtakes? Have we not the Example of the Prophets and Apoſtles for it, and of the ancient Fathers of the Church for it? I could give multitudes of Examples of young perſons, who have wrote and diſputed vehemently for Separation, but in their more experienced age confeſs their Errour: They come neareſt the Inſpired Writers, who have the humility to confeſs their Miſtakes.

Separat. For my part, I am for keeping to the Rule of Scripture; and as the Conformiſts juſtifie their Separation from the Church of *Rome*, even by the ſame Arguments may the Non-conformiſts juſtifie their Separation from the Church of *England*, there being abundance of things required not contained in our only Rule of Faith, the Bible.

Conform. Let me tell you, this is a very fallacious way of arguing, to confound Articles of Faith with Circumſtances of Worſhip; uſed by ſome Jeſuitical Writers, who go under the name of Proteſtants, as *Heath* did formerly, as you may read in the Book call-

called *Foxes and Firebrands*, and in other later Pamphlets: But as a full Answer to such impertinent Writings, I pray read a late Treatise called *The difference of the Case between Separation from the Church of* Rome, *and Separation from the Church of* England.

Separat. Your saying that indifferent things in the Worship of God, no where forbidden, are lawful, is but the same thing with the *Romanists* talking of Negative Articles of Faith, and demanding where it is forbidden to pray to Saints departed, *&c.*

Conform. The Case (as I said before) is vastly different; for we are required expresly to pray to God alone in the name of Christ; and will you parallel the Object of Prayer with a Vesture, a Gesture, and a Mode of Expression, things neither commanded nor forbidden. Read the Second Part of the *Protestant Reconciler*, and also the *Protestant Peace-maker*, written by the present Learned Bishop of *Cork*.

Separat. As I hinted before, I wonder to find you name so many Authors, when (I assure you) I don't intend to pin my Faith upon mens Sleeves, but upon the Word of God.

Conform. The reason why I referr you to these excellent Authors, is, because I would have you see that I am not singular in my Judgment and Practice; and moreover, because I study breviry in this Discourse, and referr you to further enquiry at your leisure; and I must tell you, I am no more for pinning my Faith upon Humane Authority, than you are, and no further than these excellent Men expound Scriptures according to the *Analogy* of Faith, do I respect them; neither do they desire that we should be Followers of them any further than they are of Christ. Let me ask you, do you think your self wise enough to understand the Scriptures without a Guide? All the Differences among Christians may be reduced to one Original, *viz.* about the sense and meaning of the Scriptures: And now it's a great satisfaction to every wise

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and good man, to ſee the Expoſitions of Learned and Pious Divines, that ſo he may not be impoſed upon by cunning and crafty men, who lay wait to deceive, by falſe gloſs and wreſted Interpretations of Scripture; and ſtrange it is, that you who cry out againſt Humane Authority when they are againſt your Opinions, ſhall nevertheleſs conſult at the ſame time with ſome private Friend, or Chap-man whoſe Opinion you eſteem, though it may be of very weak judgment; and this perſon (like the Pope) muſt be thought as if he were infallible, when a hundred men of better underſtandings muſt be rejected, becauſe they contradict your Sentiments: Thus men betray egregious Folly and ſinful Partiality: And let a man of great Piety, profound Reaſon, and long Experience, write a Book againſt your Principles and Practices, he ſhall be charged with Imprudence and Inconſideration by ſome weak narrow-ſoul'd Perſons; and this ſhall be a ſufficient Anſwer to all his Arguments. Thus men by Partiality ſet barrs to Truth, and perpetuate Errour, and reſolve to remain blind by ſhutting out the light; and whileſt they condemn an implicite Faith, exerciſe nothing elſe.

Separat. I cannot underſtand this temporizing humour now grown ſo much in faſhion, meerly to prevent Suffering.

Conform. Nor I cannot underſtand how ſome men can ſuffer Chriſtianly, and comfortably for refuſing to joyn in the publick Worſhip of God in the Pariſh Churches, ſeeing lawful Authority requires it, and a higher Authority no where forbids it.

Separat. Do you think a Chriſtian cannot have peace in ſuffering, who refuſeth to do a lawful Action, whileſt the thing appears to him to be unlawful.

Conform. I do not deny but he may, through the invincible prejudices of Education, and for want of better information, and (it may be) through want of judgment to diſcern the Arguments brought againſt his Opi-

nion, or perhaps want of leiſure to read and converſe with intelligent perſons who would undeceive him.

Separat. I hope you would not have weak Chriſtians read ſuch Formal Books as plead for carnal Compliance; this is the way for men to be lead into dangerous Temptations.

Conform. Thoſe are not dangerous Books that teach men their Duty to God and the King. I am of Opinion nothing hath contributed more towards our preſent Diviſions in matters of Religion, than that thoſe who are once proſelyted to a Party, account no Book ſafe, or worth the reading, than thoſe of their own Teachers, unleſs it be on thoſe common Truths that touch not the mattter in difference; many amongſt us being like ſome in the Lord *Bacon*'s time, who (as he obſerves of them) thought it a tempting of God to read a Book contrary to their private Opinions. Old Mr. *Dod* (I confeſs) uſed to adviſe his Hearers not to read the *Browniſt*'s Books for fear of being infected by them, and ſo doth Mr. *Capel* in order to the avoiding Temptations, as you may ſee in his Book on that Subject.

Separat. I am ſure our Saviour pronounceth them Bleſſed that ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake; and tells them, that *their's is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Conform. You ſay very true; but it's not the Puniſhment, but the Cauſe that makes the Martyr. Mr. *Baxter* in his Book call'd *Obedient Patience*, tells us, that there are many who now ſuffer in a Cauſe that's neither good nor juſtifiable, for refuſing Parochial Communion: Good Brother, let us lay our Hands upon our Hearts, and put this Queſtion to our ſelves; Whether turning our backs upon publick Worſhip, when we can have it no otherwiſe, will bear us out with comfort in ſuffering? Let us have a care leſt we pull down trouble upon our own Heads: I am afraid ſuffering for refuſing to comply with the external Circumſtances of our Religion, cannot be called a *Perſecution*

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for Righteouſneſs ſake: Then I ſuffer as a Chriſtian, when the Honour of Chriſt, or ſomething that offers violence to my Religion and Chriſtianity it ſelf is concerned in it, when I ſuffer for that which I cannot avoid without diſowning my ſelf to be a Chriſtian, and making Shipwrack of Faith, and a good Conſcience: But where the Caſe is not evidently thus, a man may draw miſeries upon himſelf, and yet not ſuffer as a Chriſtian, becauſe it may proceed from Humour or Intereſt. Men very often place Religion in doing or not doing what is no part of it; and then they think they may ſafely ſuffer upon that account. Doth that man ſuffer for Religion, who ſuffers for refuſing to do that which our Bleſſed Saviour and his Diſciples did; *viz.* hold Communion with publick Worſhip, notwithſtanding ſome Corruptions in the circumſtantial mode of Adminiſtration. The Church of *Galatia* was turned aſide to another Goſpel, and held Juſtification by Works, and ſome in the Church of *Corinth* denyed the Article of the Reſurrection, and yet Saint *Paul* no where calls for a Separation. Sure I am, the Primitive Chriſtians would never have paſſed thorough the fiery Trial, nor the Holy Martyrs in Queen *Maries* dayes have forfeited their Lives and Eſtates, had no more been required of them, than there is of us: *viz.* To come to Church, or to kneel at the Sacrament; but would rather have bleſſed God, and thankfully have owned the favour of their Governours. For Subjects obſtinately to ſtand out about ſuch ſmall matters, it makes them Martyrs to their own humors, rather than to the Cauſe of Chriſt, as Mr. *Bernard* well obſerves in his *Counſels of Peace: If men ſuffer for known Truths, or againſt known Error and Wickedneſs, they are ſafe; for which they have the Examples of Gods Word, and of holy Martyrs; but beware* (ſaith he) *of ſuffering for things unknown to all former ages, though they ſeem never ſo juſt.* And as the Father obſerves, it's every whit as glorious to ſuffer the Flames of Martyrdom, and to

dye for not dividing the Church by cauſleſs Separations, as it is to be burnt for refuſing to Saerifice to Idols. To be perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake, ſignifieth, to be perſecuued for Obedience unto God; But when men are proſecuted for diſobedience to lawful Authority, (ſuppoſing they are convinced the thing required is lawful) they ſuffer not for God's ſake, but for their own, and not as Martyrs, but as Malefactors: This made St. *Peter* diſtinguiſh ſo carefully between ſuffering as an Evil-doer, and as a Chriſtian; *Chap.* 2. *ver.* 13. Now to ſuffer as a Chriſtian, is to ſuffer for the Chriſtian Religion, or for any fundamental Truth of it, as the Prophets and Apoſtles did of old; who in all their Sufferings were reduced to this ſad neceſſity of diſobeying God, or the Civil Authority. Read Biſhop *Bilſons* Diſcourſe of *Chriſtian Subjection.*

Separat. But do you think a man cannot ſuffer as a Chriſtian for refuſing to ſubmit to the Ceremonies of the Church.

Conform. In caſe of neceſſity, that a man muſt not worſhip God publickly at all, unleſs he ſubmit to the uſe of ſuch Ceremonies which perhaps he thinks inconvenient, but cannot prove them abſolutely unlawful: In this caſe a man may ſin in ſuffering, becauſe at the ſame time he ſuffers for neglecting the publick Worſhip of God, which he cannot enjoy without the Ceremonies. But, (as I ſaid before) if a man hath uſed the beſt means he could to inform his Underſtanding, and yet is fully perſwaded it is ſinful to uſe the Ceremonies, he will ſuffer the more comfortably, and deſerves to be the more pitied.

Separat. I could not take the Sacrament at the Rale, for I ſcruple coming up to the Altar: I am for doing nothing more than the Law requires.

Conform. I do not place Holineſs in one part of the Church more than in another; but yet, it being more convenient for the Miniſter to give it at that Place,

place, and becauſe I would not be ſingular, when the Generality of the People accuſtom themſelves ſo to do, I ſee no Superſtition in it; eſpecially if the Miniſter deſires me to come up to the Table, thereby to prevent ſome mens Jealouſie, leſt he ſhould diſpenſe with the kneeling Geſture in a private Pew, and thereby render himſelf obnoxious to the Canon of Suſpenſion. And if ſome men chooſe rather to call the Communion Table an Altar, that ſhall not affright me away from it: What matter is it to a wiſe Man which way the Communion Table ſtands? Suppoſe he that placed it ſo, had a Superſtitious Intention, that doth not make me criminal. If this be all you ſcruple, I ſuppoſe your Miniſter will gratifie you, and give it in your Pew, the Law not forbidding it. But you and I know, that the Ancients uſed the word Altar with great Innocency, only as a figurative Expreſſion, and no more underſtood by it: If the Rales be only intended to ſecure it from indecent uſage, and to expreſs Reverence and Reſpect to the Sacrament, as we are told they are, I know no hurt in them; nor will I refuſe the Sacrament upon that account, ſo long as the Scripture no where forbids it, and Cuſtom, in ſome Churches, obligeth men to come up to that place. And whereas you ſay, you'l do nothing but what the Law requires; I wonder why you keep your Hat off in the Church, for there's no Law for it: There was no Law to compell our Saviour to contribute to the Temple, he did it to avoid offence.

Separat. I cannot go to thoſe Churches where there are Organs; it ſeems to me to be a Popiſh, fooliſh way of Praiſing, and a meer Device.

Conform. I am not fond of them, yet I think it not lawful to ſeparate from publick Worſhip upon that account, ſeeing Inſtrumental Muſick was uſed in the *Jewiſh* Church, and directed by *David* and *Solomon*; and it is alſo uſed in the *Lutheran*, and in many of the Reformed Churches as well as in ours, and many Pi-

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ous Men profeſs their Spirits much raiſed and elevated by it in ſinging the Praiſes of the great God; therefore I would not impoſe upon them, or hinder their Elevation of Soul. See Mr. *Baxter*'s Opinion of Organs, who ſaith, a man may as lawfully uſe them, as drink a Glaſs of Wine to raiſe his Spirits when dull; read alſo Biſhop *Hall*'s *Meditations*, Dr. *Moor* alſo, and the Excellent Biſhop of *Cork* upon the ſame Subject.

Separat. The Non-conformiſt Miniſters will not go to Church, very few of them at leaſt; and they muſt ſtarve for want of maintenance, if all the people ſhould forſake them, as you do.

Conform. The Caſe of us Lay-men, and of Non-conforming Miniſters, (as I told you) is vaſtly different; their Practice cannot be a Rule to us; they dare not appear in the Church, in a Corporation, for fear of being ſent to Priſon, according to the Five-mile Act; therefore do not look for them there: But though many of them do not come to Church, yet the Moderate ones amongſt them do; eſpecially in the Countrey Villages, where they dare appear in publick: And whereas you ſay, they muſt ſtarve, if not heard; I hope ſome of them can live without your maintenance: And for thoſe amongſt them that are Poor and Indigent, you may contribute your Charity towards their Relief, without breaking the Laws to hear them Preach in great numbers, when you may hear them in private Families.

Separat. We ought to hold Communion where there is the beſt Diſcipline.

Conform. You ſay true, when you can have it in a lawful way; *viz.* by Prayers to God, humble Addreſſes to Authority, faithful Performance of Duty both to Miniſters and Church Members: But men muſt have a care leſt they act ſo irregularly, as to deſerve Church-cenſure and Diſcipline themſelves, for taking a bad courſe to come at Church-diſcipline upon others: Men muſt

muſt not do evil, that good may come; this is to cure the Church by cutting her Throat. *Auſtin*, *Calvin*, *Cyprian*, and the moſt and beſt Divines, are againſt Separation meerly for defective Diſcipline: But yet, let me tell you, the Pariſh-Churches are not without Diſcipline, for the Title Rector (which the Law gives to all Parſons) implyeth it: And in the *Rubrick* the Miniſter is not only Authorized, but commanded to keep all Scandalous Perſons from the Sacrament; and the ſame Order is given in the Canon. Beſides, every Pariſh hath Wardens under Oath, to preſent all Scandalous Perſons in order to Puniſhment: Shall you and I neglect our Duty, in holding Communion with the publick Congregations, becauſe other men neglect theirs? At that rate we muſt hold Communion with no Church. I wiſh, that you, and others of our diſſenting Brethren that complain, are not acceſſary to the want of Diſcipline, by withdrawing your Brotherly Aſſiſtance, for Diſcipline muſt begin at the People. The way to cure the Church, ſaith old Mr. *Calamy* in his Sermon at *Aldermanbury*, is not to ſeparate from them, but to continue with them; and by dwelling amongſt them, to labour to enrich and heal them. We muſt not hurt a Community for private Convenience. Separation ſhews a great want of Charity, and conſequently of a true Catholick Spirit: It's below the Spirit of a generous Chriſtian to look at his own things; for he deſires not to pleaſe himſelf, but all men for their Edification.

Separat. That's the very thing that makes me ſeparate: I find I cannot edifie by our own Pariſh Preacher, he is ſo dull, and reads all his Sermon.

Separat. Perhaps the fault may be more in the Hearer than in the Preacher: Did you not come with prejudice againſt the Miniſter? Perhaps you are dull and heavy your ſelf, and ſlept away the greateſt part of the Sermon, or, it may be, your thoughts were taken up with Secular Affairs. There are thouſands of Glo-

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Glorified Saints in Heaven, and of Gracious Souls on Earth, that have found Edification in the Pariſh Churches of *England*. I could tell you of an Eminent Divine, *viz.* Mr. *Geree*, who hath told the World in Print, that amongſt all the Spiritual Converts that are in our Church, not one in a thouſand hath been converted by a Separatiſt, but before ever they went into the way of Separation: And if uſing Notes hinder Edification, you muſt not hear the beſt and the ableſt of your own Teachers, who do the ſame thing: At this rate the Miniſters muſt get the Chapters by heart, and not read them neither, leſt it hinder your Edification; do but ſhut your eyes, and then you may be edified.

Separat. I don't underſtand why we ſhould be refuſed the choice of our own Paſtors for our Souls, any more than of our Phyſicians for our Bodyes.

Conform. Whether the People have a Right to chooſe their own Paſtors, you and I will not now determine; neither is it proper to our particular Caſe: The Queſtion is, Whether if you are not permitted to chooſe your own Paſtors, you may therefore turn your back upon his Miniſtry, and grieve and diſcourage him by your abſence, and thereby ſhew an ill Example to others to do the ſame, when it may be he is a tolerable good Preacher, and a very good Man? If the Doctrine preach'd in the pooreſt Pariſh-Church in *England*, be but humbly heard and embraced (though by a weak Miniſter) there can be no danger of Salvation, becauſe it's the Doctrine of Chriſt, and the ſame for Subſtance which the Brethren preach in private. Be ſure to add to your Miniſters Labours hearty Prayers for a Bleſſing, and godly Conferences, and Watchfulneſs over your Hearts and Lives, and mourn for thoſe Sins which have deprived you of ſuch Paſtors as you deſired to chooſe; but do not forſake the Aſſembling of your ſelves together in the Publick Worſhip of God, which is much to be preferred before the Pri-

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vate Aſſemblies. Read Mr. *Charnock* upon the *Divine Attributes*, pag. 140. What if you did not chooſe your Miniſter at firſt? yet if you conſented to him afterwards, and have received benefit by his Miniſtry, or might have done, had it not been your fault; this is no juſt Plea for Separation: The *London* Presbyterians gave good reaſon why in ſome Caſes People are not to be truſted with the choice of their own Paſtors: See their *Jus Divini Miniſterii*. And Dr. *Seaman* hath particularly anſwered this Objection in a ſingle Treatiſe, and ſo hath Dr. *Stillingfleet* in his *Unreaſonableneſs of Separation*.

Separat. I cannot joyn in the Reſponſes at your Prayers; to me it looks like that vain Babling which the Scripture condemns.

Conform. If we impartially conſider the matter, it will not appear ſo; for by our Saviours Caution againſt vain Repetitions, it ſeems there are ſome Repetitions that are not vain: And this we may ſuppoſe, becauſe Chriſt himſelf praying in his Agony, thrice uſed the ſame Petitions, and that in the ſame words: That which our Saviour condemns, ſeems to be that Repetition which proceeds from the affectation of much ſpeaking in Prayer, or from a belief that God will not be moved to help us, unleſs we uſe many words, and repeat the ſame thing over in a tedious manner; but when the matter repeated is weighty and grave, and apt to move Pious Affections, it cannot be liable to the charge of Vanity: Such Petitions as, *Lord have Mercy upon us*, deſerve the putting forth of the whole ſtrength of our Deſires and Affections; and when we aſcribe Glory to the holy Trinity, we expreſs what we ought to make the end of our Worſhip, and of all the Actions of our lives. How can ſuch as charge our Service with vain Repetitions, have a Reverend eſteem of the 136th Pſalm, where for 26 Verſes together, *His Mercy endureth for ever*, is repeated in every verſe. If our Devout Affections go along with our vocal Reſponſes, it is a good way to check a wandring Spirit, and help and relieve Attention, and to excite a lively Activity in God's Service, by provoking one another to pray and to give thanks.

This was the practice of the Primitive Church, before Popery was known: Read Dr. *Faulkners Libertas Ecclesiastica*, and Mr. *Hookers Ecclesiastical Policy*, and the second part of the *Protestant Reconciler*.

Separat. I cannot joyn in these things, lest I should encourage people in Superstition by my example.

Conform. Your refusing to hold Communion with Gods publick Worship, encourages people more in superstition than you are aware of; for that's properly Superstition, to scruple and place Religion in forbearing lawful actions, with a *touch not*, *taste not*, *handle not*: let me tell you, that you do ten times more mischief by your Separation, than you think you do: for I would judge charitably, and hope that you do not design mischief; you harden all the Sectaries in their way: You promote *Atheism*, people's seeing so many new unheard of ways in Religion, think there is no Religion at all, and so neglect all. Again, you are guilty of the sin of Schism, for such a Sin is all causeless separation; you undermine the reputation of your Parish Minister thereby, render his Ministry the less successful; you wrong the Separators by cherishing their causeless scruples, and so become accessary to the weakness of their Consciences, you train them up to a dislike of publick Authority, cause them to break the first Commandment; and nourish in them Spiritual pride, in judging better of themselves than they ought. Read Mr. *Bradshaws Unreasonableness of Separation.*

Separat. But do you seriously perswade me to go to Church?

Conform. Not I, but the Law: I'le perswade no man to do what he is not satisfied he may do with a good Conscience; for I have no ambition to make Proselytes; neither am I the better or the worse, for another mans differing from me. I confess in general, I think my self obliged in Conscience, to perswade those with whom I converse, to peaceableness of temper, and to Obedience to Authority; and I hope one good effect of this discourse will be, to help to cure that censorious Spirit that abounds; by letting men see how little cause they have to condemn others, for doing that which they have good reasons for, and such arguments

ments which I fear the Separatists never thought on. If this Conference doth but bring Dissenters to more Charity towards those who do conform to Lay-Communion, it will be a good step towards their doing so too in time themselves.

Separat. I do admire how you can submit to the Use of the Cross in Baptism, which is so plainly a significant Ceremony.

Conform. I am not Ignorant what tedious Disputes there have been amongst learned men about this Matter, whether it may lawfully be imposed; but this is none of our present controversie: The Question is between you and I Lay-men, Whether we may lawfully suffer our Children to be so Baptized with it, when we cannot have it done without it: for my part, I do not in the least Question but we may. For consider, this Professing sign was anciently used by the Primitive Christians (before the Corruptions of Popery were ever heard of,) in defiance of all sorts of Infidels, in token that they should not be ashamed of a crucified Saviour: we do in this but follow the examples of the purest and holiest Professors of the Gospel that ever were. The Cross is not appointed to represent any thing to us, but only to remind us of a Duty which we are bound to do; like that Altar which was built by the Children of *Reuben* and *Gad*, not for Burnt-offering, nor for Sacrifice, but that it might be a Witness. The Question is not, Whether it be lawful for the Minister to use it; that hath been denyed by those very Nonconformists, who do grant that Lay-men may offer their Children to be Baptized where it is used, if they cannot have it done without it. Because Baptism is Gods Ordinance, and the Sin (if it be one) is the Ministers and not ours; for another mans sinful mode will not Justifie the neglect of our Duty. And if every significant custom in a Church must pass for a new Sacrament, then sitting at the Communion is a new Sacrament, because we are told it betokens Rest and Communion with Christ; and putting off the Hat in Prayer is a professing sign of Reverence; it cannot be thought a *Medium* in Gods Worship, because our worship is not directed to it, nor do we Kneel before it, nor declare that we are excited by it to worship God. The sign of the Cross is not an Essentia of Baptism, as is ma-

niſeſt by the Canon; which tells us, that the Infant Baptized is by vertue of Baptiſm, before it be ſigned with the ſign of the Croſs, received into the Congregation of Chriſts Flock, as a perfect Member thereof; and not by any Power aſcribed unto the ſign of the Croſs. And it after addeth, that this Church accounteth this ſign a lawful outward Ceremony, and honourable Badge, whereby the Infant is dedicated to the ſervice of him that dyed upon the Croſs: now dedicating a Perſon being an engaging or ſetting him a part for God, and it being evident from the Canon that this dedicating is wholly diſtinct from the Baptiſmal dedication, to be a Member of Chriſts Church; we muſt hereby underſtand the Church to engage this member upon her account to the ſervice of Chriſt; as when a Father ſhall warn his Children, to Devote themſelves to the ſervice of God, as he himſelf hath done. And this ſenſe is yet more evident from the Office of Baptiſm, where the Miniſter baptizing (acting in the Name of God) ſaith in the Singular Number, *I Baptize, &c.* But ſaith in the Plural number, *We receive this Child, and do ſign him, &c.* acting herein in the Name of the Rulers and other Members of the Catholick Church, in Communion with us; the whole body deſiring and ſeeking the good of every member: Moreover it is uſed after Baptiſm, and in caſe of ſudden ſickneſs it may be omitted, as you may ſee in the Liturgy; which plainly proves it is not thought eſſentially neceſſary to the Ordinance: When any charge is given to any Perſon, the common Wiſdom of Mankind hath alwayes thought it very expedient, to add to the Solemnity thereof by ſome ſignificant Rite. And this is all that's intended by the ſign of the Croſs. See Biſhop *Morton* on this Subject.

Separat. But it's good to keep as far off as we can from any thing that hath been abuſed by Papiſts.

Conform. But it is not good to run from *Rome* into *Babel*: he that will condemn a piouſly order'd ſign of Admonition and Memorial, becauſe a ſuperſtitious, operative uſe of the ſame is not allowable, muſt condemn things greatly different as if they were the ſame; as if becauſe *Gideons* Ephod was abuſed when it was made an Idol, therefore the uſe of an Ephod by *Samuel* in the ſervice of God muſt be thought inſufferable; and becauſe

cauſe the Image of *Cæſar* ſet up to be worſhipt is abominable, therefore his Image ſtampt upon his Coyn muſt not be tolerated: Thoſe mens Bodies which were once abuſed to the ſervice of ſin, may yet find acceptance with God in ſerving him. The Directory tells us, that Things and Places formerly abuſed to Superſtition, are not preſently to be laid aſide as unlawful; and the Proteſtants beyond the Seas, in their Confeſſions declare, that the true way of Reformation in the Church, is not to root out every thing that was found in the Church of *Rome*, but to reject what was fit to be rejected, and to preſerve what was fit to be preſerved: And the Church of *England* profeſſeth the ſame, in the Preface to the Book of Common-Prayer: It's true, *Hezekiah* brake down the Brazen Serpent when abuſed to Idolatry, but we muſt conſider that the *Jews* had poſitive Laws to demoliſh all Idolatrous places, which we Chriſtians have not; and moreover, it was done by lawful Authority, whoſe regular Reformations we muſt wait for in the way of our Duty: And be ſure to remember, that we are not diſcourſing what is convenient in caſe of Liberty, but what is lawful in caſe of Neceſſity.

Separat. I have ſo great a prejudice againſt the Surplice, that I cannot attend the Prayers of one that wears it, it ſeems to me to be ſo very indecent.

Conform. I will not go about to diſpute for a white Surplice, but I'll keep to my uſual Method of Diſcourſe, and only deſire to know of you, whether you think you can juſtifie the lawfulneſs of neglecting the publick Worſhip of God, becauſe the Miniſter that officiates doth not wear his Garment of ſuch a Colour as pleaſeth your fancy; eſpecially when we conſider, that the greateſt part of Mankind, both *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, have accounted white Garments both honourable and comely; and they are alſo approved as ſuch by the Wiſdom of God himſelf, in the Deſcription of the moſt excellent Perſons and Things. I pray tell me, how came you to have a better judgment concerning what is decent in the Church, than the reſt of the World have, or than he who gave the Being both to the World, and to the Church? Again, If we conſider the great Antiquity of this white Garment in the Church, before ever Popery was known: For, ſince the degeneracy

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of the *Roman* Church, the Surplice is none of their proper Massing Garments, being never worn by the Priest who consecrateth at the Mass; but there are six other Garments which are used by their Priests, and accounted their holy Garments, all of them having their particular Consecrations, as the Surplice hath not; this Garment having been less abused by them than their Churches, and their Communion Cloaths, which, by reason of their manifest Conveniency and Decency, are by us still thought lawful to be used.

The use of black Garments may be argued against from the Topick of Abuse, with as much plausibleness as can be argued against white: For the ancient *Pagan* Priests wore a black Garment, and were from thence called *Chemarims*, as you may see in *Zeph.* 1. 4. which *Junius* renders *Atratus*, (as *Buxtorf* observes.) At this rate men may dispute themselves out of God's Creation, since Heaven and Earth, and all sorts of Creatures have been Idolatrously abused. *Calvin* himself dislikes the Heat of Contention against the use of it; and many Protestant Churches use it in *Germany*, *Denmark*, *Norway*, *&c.* And I could prove, that it was not properly an *Aaronical* Garment, and therefore not liable to the charge of *Judaism*; for the High-priest's Ephod was made of Blue, and Purple, and Scarlet; and his Robe was all of Blue, which can have no affinity with the Surplice; and if there were any part of their Garments white, it differed very much in the shape or fashion from ours. But if it did not, I am sure good men will rejoyce to hear the Gospel preached, although it were in a Fool's Coat.

Separat. I am not so much against a Form of Prayer in General, as I am against the Particular Form prescribed; it having so many needless Tautologies, and is yet so defective in many Cases, and such a cold, dull, lifeless way of Expression, that I cannot joyn with it.

Conform. If it be such a cold, empty Form, I pray come and fill it with your warm Devotions; for the fault (I am apt to think) is in the Supplicants, who do not joyn Faith and Fervency. It's frequently observed, that the same persons that condemn the use of the Common-prayer,

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condemn also the use of the Lord's Prayer it self, which is a considerable part of the Liturgy. Suppose those excellent men who penned the Prayers of the Church should have lived in our times, and have used those very words *memoriter*, would we have refused to joyn with them in Prayer? and if they would have been good from their mouths, why not from the mouths of other men? I should be ashamed to repeat the rude Expressions, and impertinent Tautologies of some of your own in their *ex-tempore* Prayers; will you therefore refuse to hold Communion with them? The ordinary Lord's Day's Service in the Liturgy, is an excellent Form of sound Words, suited to common Capacities, and common Necessities, and from thence takes it's Denomination. The Compilers of it were excellent Men, and some of them Martyrs for the Protestant Reformed Religion: And (as Mr. *Ball* observes) it was not taken out of the Mass-Book; but composed from the purest Liturgies in the primitive times, before ever the Mass-Book was heard of in the World: The Mass-Book may more properly be said to have borrowed some part of it, as that Learned Author well observes. Good Sir, consider, what makes up the Liturgy? is it not the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Commandments, the Psalms of *David*, the Song of *Zecharias*, the Virgin *Mary* and old *Simeon*? What better Doxologies of Praise for our Redemption by Jesus Christ, according to the ancient use of the Christian Church? What hurt is there in the excellent Hymn of St. *Ambrose*, and in the Prayer of St. *Chrysostome*? Are there not also two Chapters read in the holy Bible, one out of the Old Testament, another out of the New, besides Epistles and Gospels proper for the day, together with Comprehensive Collects, and Prayers for the whole State of Christ's Church Militant, and particularly for our Governours, that we may live peaceably and quietly, in all Godliness and Honesty?

Separat. I am apt to think you are under a great mistake, in thinking Uniformity the way to Unity. I confess, Mental Communion amongst all the Members of Christ, is to be recommended, *viz.* in Faith and Love; but Local Communion

munion will no way help to cure Diviſions.

Conform. It is the general Opinion of the wiſeſt Men, and the beſt Chriſtians, that nothing can more conduce towards Union, than Parochial Communion; for when men are perfectly joyned together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame Judgment, all ſpeaking the ſame thing, and with one mouth glorifying God, and joyning their *Amen* in the publick Congregation; this is the beſt expedient to increaſe brotherly Love, and to put an end to our unchriſtian Heats and Animoſities, and to create a right Underſtanding amongſt Men. Let ſome Politick Perſons pretend what they pleaſe, difference in Judgment will produce difference in Affection; and therefore if we would leave off quarrelling one with another, let us in the Houſe of God frequently pray one with another, and particularly this excellent Prayer of our Church: *That God would look down in much Pity and Compaſſion upon this diſtreſſed Church and Nation, whoſe bleeding Wounds, occaſioned by the lamentable Diviſions that are amongſt us, cry aloud for his ſpeedy Help, and ſaving Relief; and that he would ſtir up every Soul of us carefully to become ſincere Chriſtians, and root out of our Hearts Pride, Vain-glory, Wrath, Bitterneſs, all unjuſt Prejudice, and cauſeleſs Jealouſies, all Hatred and Malice, and deſire of Revenge, and whatſoever it is that may exaſperate our Minds, or hinder us from diſcerning the things of our Peace; that ſo by the Power of the holy Spirit of Peace, he would diſpoſe all our Hearts to ſuch Meekneſs of Wiſdom, and Lowlineſs of Mind, ſuch calm and deliberate long-ſuffering and forbearing one another in Love, with ſuch due eſteem of thoſe whom he hath ſet over us, as may turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the Hearts of the Children to the Fathers; that ſo we may become a ready People, prepared to live in Unity and Peace.* Amen.

FINIS.